

**Friendship Heights  
Transportation Management District  
Advisory Committee  
April 13, 2010**

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**Voting Members Present**

Joe Dixon	GEICO
William P. Farley (Vice-Chair)	Town of Somerset
Tiffany Gee	Chevy Chase Land Company
David Glass	Chevy Chase Village Board of Managers
Leonard Grant	Friendship Heights Village Council
Robert Schwarzbart (Chair)	Friendship Heights Village Council

**Non-Voting Members Present**

Sandra L. Brecher	DOT/Transit Services Division-Commuter Services
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**TMD Staff Present**

Nakengi Byrd	DOT/Transit Services Division-Commuter Services
Jim Carlson	DOT/Transit Services Division-Commuter Services
Sheila Wilson	DOT/Transit Services Division-Commuter Services

**Absent**

Marc Esposito	Bloomingtondale's
Kerri Gates	The JBG Companies
Chief Roy Gordon	Chevy Chase Village Police
Capt. Russell Hamill	Montgomery County Police
Kenneth Hartman	B-CC Services Center
Bill McCloskey	Citizens Coordinating Committee on Friendship Heights
Christine McGrew	M-NCPPC

**Guests**

Deanna B. Archey	Division of Transit Services - Ride On
Bob Joiner	The Agenda News
Julian Mansfield	Friendship Heights Village
Barbara Tauben	Friendship Heights Village Civic Assn.
Nicole White	Bloomingtondale's

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**Abbreviations Used Herein Include:**

BCC Chamber = Bethesda-Chevy Chase Chamber of Commerce  
CERB = Committee Evaluation Review Board

**Item 1 and 2 – Introductions/Minutes Approval:** Members introduced themselves. March minutes were approved and seconded.

**Item 3 – Chair's Comments:** Robert Schwarzbart thanked Vice-Chair Bill Farley for chairing the March meeting. He also announced the departure of two Committee Members: Christine Norris from

Wisconsin Place due to health issues, and **David Torchinsky** from Binstock, Torchinsky and Associates due to relocation of his law practice.

**Mr. Schwarzbart** welcomed **Deanna Archey** from Ride On and **Nicole White**, attending in a non-voting status for **Marc Esposito** of Blomingdale's.

**Item 4 – Proposed Ride On Service Changes:** **Jim Carlson** introduced **Deanna Archey**, Senior Transportation Planner for Ride On.

**Ms. Archey** distributed a list of Ride On service changes recommended under the County Executive's FY11 budget. She said that in the public forum in February 45 routes could potentially be affected. The recommended changes consist of full eliminations, route reconfigurations and trip reductions. The public comments were considered by the County Executive and full eliminations were reduced from nine to four. The five retained routes are: 21, 30, 33, 53, 81 and Route 31 rush hour only. The rest of the proposed services changes are listed below:

- Ten Saturday service eliminations
- Five Sunday service eliminations
- Four route segment eliminations
- Evening trip reductions with last trip remaining

The County Executive submitted the proposal to County Council on March 15<sup>th</sup>. The Council will deliberate for approximately two months, with a final vote during May. If Council accepts the proposal, then changes will take effect July 4, 2010; if the Council makes changes, then the effective date will be sometime in September 2010. The FY11 proposal is on the County's website – type "FY11 Budget" in the Search window.

**Mr. Carlson** asked what criteria were used for deciding to discontinue a route. **Ms. Archey** said that the routes were chosen based on productivity. She added that February's public forum was well attended and comments about changes were carefully considered by the County Executive.

The bus routes in Friendship Heights affected by the cuts are:

- Routes 23 and 29 – evening reduction and weekend discontinuation
- Route 34 – evening reduction
- Routes T2, L2 and Z2 – weekend discontinuation

The T2, L2 and Z2 were originally Metro operated, but Ride On picked up the routes' weekend service because they were up for elimination by Metro. Metro may operate these routes again, but that has not been decided.

**Ms. Archey** said the savings have been realized through a reduction in fuel and operator costs; in addition some Ride On operator positions have been eliminated. Ride On's total operating budget is \$91.5 million.

**Mr. Schwarzbart** said he was concerned about the Route 23 service reduction because it serves Sibley Hospital. **Ms. Archey** said ridership on the 23 was low, and the area is also serviced by Metro (D6). All changes were scrutinized to impact riders as little as possible.

**Ms. Archey** announced a public forum on April 22<sup>nd</sup> regarding the Ride On fare increases. Fare increases are a portion of Ride On's \$2.7 million savings contribution to alleviate the budget gap. The threshold for determining low ridership is 10 to 15 riders per hour for the larger buses and half that amount for the

smaller buses. Ms. Archey added that Ride On is moving away from purchasing smaller buses due to the older diesel technology which has a negative impact on the environment.

**Mr. Schwarzbart** stated his concern about bus operators not abiding by the three-minute idling rule while in the bus terminal; this has a cost factor and is an environmental hazard as well. **Ms. Archey** said she was aware of the problem and would forward his concerns to the Ride On operations manager. She also announced that Route 34 will be detoured for two months (June-August) due to construction on the Cedar Lane Bridge. **Ms. Brecher** mentioned that the Cedar Lane Bridge will have a bike lane added.

**Ms. Brecher** reiterated that the cuts are proposed budget changes that have not been adopted by the Council and now is the time to give input.

**Item 5 – Committee Member replacements:** In light of the recent resignations of two Committee members, **Mr. Schwarzbart** urged members to focus on attendance policy enforcement and new member recruitment. **Mr. Carlson** explained the difficulty in member recruitment due to TMD business qualifications and the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Chamber (BCC) nomination process.

**Ms. Brecher** informed the committee that employers do not have to join the Chamber in order to be nominated to the Committee. They simply must be nominated by the Chamber. However, this process has at times become awkward when a business is not a member of the Chamber and doesn't want to become one. She explained that every 10 years the Committee Evaluation Review Board (CERB) reviews the County's Committees, Boards and Commissions and solicits recommendations from Advisory Committee members and others. They then make recommendations to County Council. During the last review, CERB recommended to County Council that the Chamber of Commerce not be involved in the nomination of employer representatives. Business representatives should be able to apply directly to the County Executive. However, the recommendation was rejected by County Council. **Ms. Brecher** urged the Committee to make the recommendation again for the next review.

**Item 6 – Pedestrian Safety concerns:** **Mr. Schwarzbart** discussed pedestrian safety concerns at the corner of Wisconsin and Western Avenue. A large curb stone at that busy corner has been knocked out of place, creating a tripping hazard, and there are bricks missing in the sidewalk around the bike rack walkway area next to the bus terminal on the Western Avenue side. Also there is a seat missing from a bus bench on Western. **Mr. Carlson** said DDOT has maintenance responsibility for public access ways along Western Avenue, but the County and SHA may have some responsibility as well. **Mr. Schwarzbart** continued that the intersection serves as an introduction into Montgomery County; this creates a bad image as long as repairs are not made. Also, if someone is injured in a fall they will sue everyone regardless of whose responsibility it is to make the corrections, so the issues need to be resolved quickly.

**Mr. Grant** said there has always been confusion about who is responsible for sidewalk and adjacent walkway repairs. He had been informed that the architect of the Chevy Chase Metro Building had provided detailed specifications for the type and design of the brick paving and accordingly had agreed that the management would be responsible for its upkeep under and adjacent to the building. **Mr. Grant** said that those brick areas were poorly constructed and the rain and cold cause the bricks to loosen.

**Tiffany Gee** said that building manager **Leslie Olson** reports online to the County any repairs that need to be made. In response to **Mr. Grant's** request, **Ms. Gee** will find out who is responsible for the brick walkway next to the bus terminal.

**Mr. Mansfield** said that instead of the County banning brick walkway construction, which would have been one solution, it decided to adopt the "Bethesda Standard" model for brick construction in which the

bricks are set in concrete; however, maintenance tends to be costly. The Village of Friendship Heights followed the Bethesda Standard when recently installing brick crosswalks at its intersections. **Ms. Brecher** said that the County decided to allow brick walkway construction in urban centers because these walkways could be maintained in those areas. Unfortunately, the area around the bus terminal was constructed before the Bethesda Standard was adopted. **Ms. Brecher** said she would get more information on the brick walkway construction for the committee.

**Item 7 – Updates:** **Mr. Carlson** reported that the Friendship Heights Annual Commuter Surveys have been completed with an overall 20 percent return rate. The companies in Friendship Heights with the highest employee participation include:

- GEICO – 23 percent
- Polinger, Shannon and Luchs – 76 percent
- The JBG Companies – 58 percent
- United Educators – 59 percent

All Transportation Benefits Coordinators (contacts for survey outreach) at companies with a return rate above 50 percent will receive a Giant \$25 gift card. There are a few more surveys that will be collected today after the meeting.

**Ms. Brecher** announced upcoming Commuter Services and regional events:

- Earth Day – April 22, 2010
- Bike to Work Day – May 21, 2010
- Live Near Your Work / Telework Seminar – June 10, 2010

**Ms. Brecher** also announced the County Executive proposed a Ride On bus fare increase from \$1.45 to \$1.60 when paying with cash, and an increase from \$1.35 to \$1.50 when paying with SmarTrip cards. If Metro's proposed increases go into effect, then Ride On's resulting increase will be \$1.70 for cash fare and \$1.60 for SmarTrip.

There are additional proposed cuts to the Kids Ride Free program, which allows children 18 and under to ride free on Ride On buses weekdays from 2 pm to 7 pm; and parking rates will also increase in an effort to bring in more revenue.

Meeting adjourned at 10 am

Next meeting date: May 11, 2010